

1608731BYLYCHTU

AM-CHILDREN

BANGUI, CENTRAL AFRICAN EMPIRE, MAY 15 (AP) - WHILE CROWDS OUTSIDE HIS PALACE CHEERED EMPEROR BOKASSA PERSONALLY DENIED AN AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT OF A MASSACRE OF CHILDREN IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN EMPIRE.

THE COUNTRY'S OFFICIAL NEWS AGENCY, ACAP, REPORTED LAST NIGHT THAT THE EMPEROR TOLD A GROUP OF DIPLOMATS THE CROWD'S SUPPORT SHOWED THE ALLEGATIONS MUST BE FALSE.

AMNESTY, THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE-WINNING RIGHTS ORGANIZATION, SAID ON MONDAY THAT 50 TO 100 CHILDREN PROTESTING COMPULSORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS HAD DIED IN A BANGUI PRISON ON APRIL 18.

IT SAID MORE THAN 100 CHILDREN HAD BEEN HELD IN A CROWDED JAIL AND THAT BETWEEN 12 AND 28 HAD SUFFOCATED, WHILE OTHERS WERE BAYONETTED OR BEATEN TO DEATH WITH STICKS AND WHIPS.

AS HE MET IN THIS CONFERENCE ROOM, A HUGE CROWD OF PARENTS IS GATHERED OUTSIDE WHO HAVE COME SPONTANEOUSLY TO CHEER ME, THE RULER TOLD THE DIPLOMATS YESTERDAY.

"IF IT IS TRUE THAT I HAVE HAD CHILDREN MASSACRED, DO YOU THINK THE POPULATION AFFECTED WOULD STILL BE SO ENTHUSIASTIC?" HE ASKED, ACCORDING TO ACAP.

THE CHILDREN ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN JAILED AS PUNISHMENT FOR THROWING STONES AT OFFICIAL CARS, INCLUDING THAT OF EMPEROR BOKASSA.

MORE 1230

— On an earlier
view of Bokassa
meeting.

— we are awaiting
build report

— we note that
GCAE
says it invited
committee & it
occurs to us
that a meeting
that organization
could settle
the question of
about can't
for all.

— we will follow
this

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AM-CHILDREN 2 BANGUI

ACAP SAID: HIS MAJESTY BOKASSA THE FIRST, HEAD OF STATE, INSISTED ON CONFERRING PERSONALLY WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERNATIONAL OPINION TO COMMUNICATE TANGIBLE PROOF AGAINST THE ALLEGATIONS OF THE ORGANIZATION AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND THE FOREIGN PRESS ABOUT AN ALLEGED MASSACRE OF YOUNG CENTRAFRICANS BY SOLDIERS OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD.

THE AGENCY SAID THE EMPEROR PRODUCED DOCUMENTS TO DISPROVE THE CHARGES, INCLUDING A STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE CONFIRMING THAT ABOUT 140 SCHOOLCHILDREN, WHOSE TEMPORARY ABSENCE COULD HAVE CAUSED CONCERN, WERE IN ZAIRE.

THE DIPLOMATS WERE ALSO GIVEN COPIES OF LEAFLETS DISTRIBUTED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAFRICAN STUDENTS IN PARIS, WHICH ACAP SAID WERE THE BASIS OF THE LONDON-BASED AMNESTY'S CHARGES.